

Nizar cites Perak crisis in claim labelled 'traitor' by Utusan Malaysian Insider
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By Ida Lim

KUALA LUMPUR, April 10 — Datuk Seri Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin today revisited the 2009 Perak power tussle when insisting that an Utusan Malaysia report last May had allegedly inferred he was a traitor to the Sultan of Johor.

Nizar, a former Perak menteri besar, was today testifying in his defamation suit against Utusan Melayu (M) Berhad, the publisher of Utusan Malaysia, over its report based on his tweets on the Sultan of Johor's winning bid for the "WWW 1" vehicle registration number.

During cross-examination, Nizar had disagreed that Utusan's report did not contain words carrying the meaning that he was a traitor to the Sultan.

Utusan's lawyer, Datuk Firoz Hussein Ahmad Jamaluddin, then challenged Nizar to show the court the specific words in the report that said that he was a traitor.

Nizar did not do so, but replied that the word "derhaka" (treason) was ubiquitous in Perak then.

"Because at that time, the word derhaka (traitorous) in Perak was quite synonymous with me," Nizar said, having said the Utusan report would have led to the implied meaning that he was also a traitor to the Sultan of Johor.

Nizar again brought up the Perak constitutional crisis when insisting that the report implied that he was "anti-Sultan", despite Firoz pointing out there was no such word in the Utusan report.

Although Nizar later agreed that the matter was not related to Perak, he said his involvement with the state's royal institution could not be denied and there were elements accusing him of being a traitor.

When contacted later, Nizar's lawyer, Mohd Fitri Asmuni, confirmed that his client was referring to the 2009 Perak crisis where people in the silver state had accused him of being a traitor.

When met outside the courtroom, Nizar also confirmed that he was referring to the Perak crisis.

During cross-examination, Nizar also disagreed that he had disputed or criticised the Sultan of Johor's RM520,000 bid of the registration number.

"My statement was not critical, but more observational in nature," Nizar said.

When asked for the difference between criticising and giving opinion, the Bukit Gantang MP replied: "Criticism means I do not agree and I give other suggestions but I only give my view as a politician. There's a difference."

On July 10 last year, Nizar had filed a RM50 million defamation suit against Utusan for its May 31 report after his May 28 tweets on the "WWW 1" car plate number.

Nizar, the outgoing Pasir Panjang Assemblyman, had claimed that the allegedly defamatory statements implied that he is a traitor to the Malay rulers, especially the Sultan of Johor; a politician who is anti-royalty; and who instigated Malaysians to hate the Sultan of Johor, among other things.

He had also filed a similar defamation suit against Sistem Televisyen Malaysia Berhad (TV3) over its report on the tweets, seeking damages of RM50 million.

The hearing before Datuk Rosnaini Saub resumes at 10am tomorrow.

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